



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS 12 FOR MARRIAGE FRAUD, INTERNATIONAL ALIEN SMUGGLING

CHICAGO — A federal grand jury handed down indictments Tuesday that were unsealed yesterday charging 12 defendants for their roles in marriage fraud and alien smuggling schemes in the Chicago and Rockford areas that allegedly recruited and offered U.S. citizens up to \$10,000 to marry Lithuanian nationals for the purpose of fraudulently obtaining immigration benefits. Today's indictments are the result of an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The defendants were charged in two multi-count indictments that were unsealed today and announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. According to the indictment, U.S. citizens were recruited and offered between \$8,000 and \$10,000 to engage in fraudulent marriages with Lithuanian nationals. At times the U.S. citizens were instructed to travel to Lithuania to marry the foreign national, and other times the U.S. citizens were recruited to marry undocumented Lithuanian nationals already living in the U.S.

One indictment alleges that Remigijus Adomaitis, 28, recruited and paid a U.S. citizen to travel to Lithuania in November 2004 to marry a Lithuanian woman he had never met. After the marriage took place, Adomaitis accompanied the U.S. citizen to the U.S. embassy in Warsaw, Poland, to help him file paperwork that allowed the woman to fraudulently enter the U.S. in March 2005 as the wife of a U.S. citizen. The U.S. citizen was to be paid \$1,000 after the marriage, and \$250 a month for two to three years.

"The national security and public safety of our nation depends on an immigration system with integrity," said Special Agent-in-Charge Elissa A. Brown of the Chicago ICE office. "ICE is restoring this integrity by aggressively targeting the criminals and human smuggling organizations that are motivated by pure greed and profit."

The two indictments charge the following defendants:

United States v. Adomaitis, et al., 05 CR 534

Remigijus Adomaitis, 28, a Lithuanian national and permanent resident of the U.S., is charged with three counts of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud and two counts of alien smuggling. Ina Bradley, 66, a Lithuanian national, is charged with two counts of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud. Robert Bradley, 54, a U.S. citizen, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud and one count of marriage fraud. Inga Vesciunaite, 22, a Lithuanian national; Edith May Combs, 30, and Adam Pirlot, 24, both U.S. citizens, are each charged with one count of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud.

In March 2005 Adomaitis allegedly recruited a U.S. citizen (Individual A) to travel to Lithuania to marry a foreign national for the purpose of committing immigration fraud. As part of the conspiracy, Adomaitis helped the U.S. citizen fill out and file a U.S passport application so that the U.S. citizen could travel to Lithuania. In April 2005 Ina Bradley instructed the U.S. citizen to write letters to the foreign national to make it appear that they had an ongoing personal relationship. Adomaitis then paid the U.S. citizen \$200 in exchange for agreeing to marry the foreign national.

In June 2004 Edith May Combs introduced Adam Pirlot to Adomaitis as someone who could participate in marriage fraud with a foreign national. Adomaitis offered to pay Pirlot \$1,000 once the marriage took place, and \$250 a month for two to three years thereafter. In November 2004 Pirlot traveled to Lithuania and met up with Adomaitis. On Nov. 30, Pirlot married Inga Vesciunaite, a Lithuanian woman he had never met, and then traveled to Warsaw, Poland, with Adomaitis to file paperwork that enabled Vesciunaite to enter the U.S. On March 23, 2005, Adomaitis and Pirlot met Vesciunaite at O'Hare airport upon her entry into the U.S.

The indictment also alleges that in August 2004 Adomaitis paid U.S. citizen Robert Bradley \$1,000 to fraudulently marry a Lithuanian woman, then named Ina Saltiene. On Nov. 8, 2004, Ina Bradley filed a petition with the federal government to obtain legal immigration status based on her marriage to Robert Bradley. Robert Bradley was to be paid \$200 to \$300 a month until his "wife" received her green card.

United States v. Surantas, et al., 05 CR 535

Odeta Surantas, 36, a Lithuanian national and permanent resident of the U.S.; and Romualdas Surantas, 57, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Lithuania, are each charged with one count of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud, and one count of conspiracy to commit alien smuggling. Aidas Matkevicius, 32, a Lithuanian national, Rasa Bunikiene, 39, a Lithuanian national, Rasa Jokubauskaite, 24, a Lithuanian national, and Michelle Mendez, 20, a U.S. citizen, were also charged in the indictment.

The indictment alleges that some of the defendants conspired to arrange a fraudulent marriage between Jokubauskaite and a U.S. citizen to obtain legal immigration status for Jokubauskaite. On March 8, 2005, Matkevicius met with the U.S. citizen at a Denny's restaurant in Mundelein to discuss the marriage arrangements and informed him that he would receive \$8,000 for engaging in such a marriage. On March 18, 2005, Matkevicius and the U.S. citizen traveled to a Rockford residence to discuss the terms of the marriage with Odeta Surantas. At that time the U.S. citizen met Jokubauskaite for the first time. During the meeting Romualdas Surantas took photographs of the U.S. citizen and Jokubauskaite to make it appear to the government that they were an intimate couple. That same day Jokubauskaite and the U.S. citizen obtained a marriage license at the Boone County Courthouse.

The indictment also alleges that Michelle Mendez entered into a fraudulent marriage with Matkevicius for the purpose of evading immigration laws, and that Bunikiene also committed marriage fraud by marrying an unnamed U.S citizen.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Amarjeet S. Bhachu prosecuted this case. An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.